

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 PA-02 PRS-01 USIE-00 JUSE-00

FTC-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 L-03 INRE-00 SSO-00 /040 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9263

INFO AMCONSUL CALI

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

UNCLAS BOGOTA 05747

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR MRN 05747 VICE 05746

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: OGEN, CO

SUBJ: WALL STREET JOURNAL STORY ON COLOMBIAN PRISONERS

WORKING FOR U. S. FIRMS

REF: STATE 145343

1. EMBASSY HAS NOT YET RECEIVED USIA WIRELESS FILE STORY.

2. SEVERAL U. S. FIRMS ARE EMPLOYING PRISON LABOR AS PART OF THE "ACTION IN COLOMBIA" PROGRAM. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MANY U. S. FIRMS ARE INVOLVED OR HOW MANY PRISONERS ARE EMPLOYED. ACTION IN COLOMBIA IS A NON-PROFIT GROUP BACKED BY THE GOC AS WELL AS BUSINESSMEN IN COLOMBIA. AS PART OF ACTION IN COLOMBIA REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENCY AND THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE SERVE ON A NEWLY CREATED NATIONAL BOARD TO IMPLEMENT A "NATIONAL PROGRAM OF PRISON INDUSTRIALIZATION". THIS PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO EXPAND PRISON EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CONTRIBUTE TO PRISONER REHABILITATION.

3. ACCORDING TO AN EL ESPECTADOR STORY MAY 18, 1975

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ENTITLED "PRISON INDUSTRIALIZATION BEGINNING", THE GOC

IS BACKING THE PROGRAM AS PART OF A PRISONER REHABILITATION EFFORT. OF THE REPORTED 30 THOUSAND PRISONERS, 29 PERCENT HAVE BEEN WORKING SPORADICALLY. MOST OF THE REST HAVE BEEN CLASSIFIED AS UNEMPLOYED.

4. APPARENTLY ABOUT 70 BUSINESS FIRMS SUPPORT "ACTION IN COLOMBIA" BY A) PROVIDING WITHOUT CHARGE WASTE MATERIAL FOR MANUFACTURING TO PRISON FACTORIES; B) CONTRACTING THE PRISONS TO MANUFACTURE PRODUCTS NEEDED BY THE COMPANIES AND THEIR EMPLOYEES AS WELL AS FOR A SALE; C) FURNISHING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE; AND D) PROMOTING THE SALE OF PRISON-PRODUCED PRODUCTS THROUGH EXPOSITIONS, FAIRS, ETC.

5. THE EMBASSY HAS NO INFORMATION TO INDICATE THAT ANY PRODUCTS PRODUCED IN PRISONS WITH THE COOPERATION OF U. S. FIRMS ARE EXPORTED. THE SHOE FIRM REFERRED TO IN THE JOURNAL STORY IS A COLOMBIAN-OWNED FIRM IN CALI, WORKING IN COOPERATION WITH THE PRISON THERE. WE HAVE BEEN ADVISED THAT THE SHOE MAY HAVE BEEN STOPPED BY U. S. CUSTOMS AT THE URGING OF THE AFL-CIO.

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